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THE  
QUIET SINGER

AND OTHER POEMS

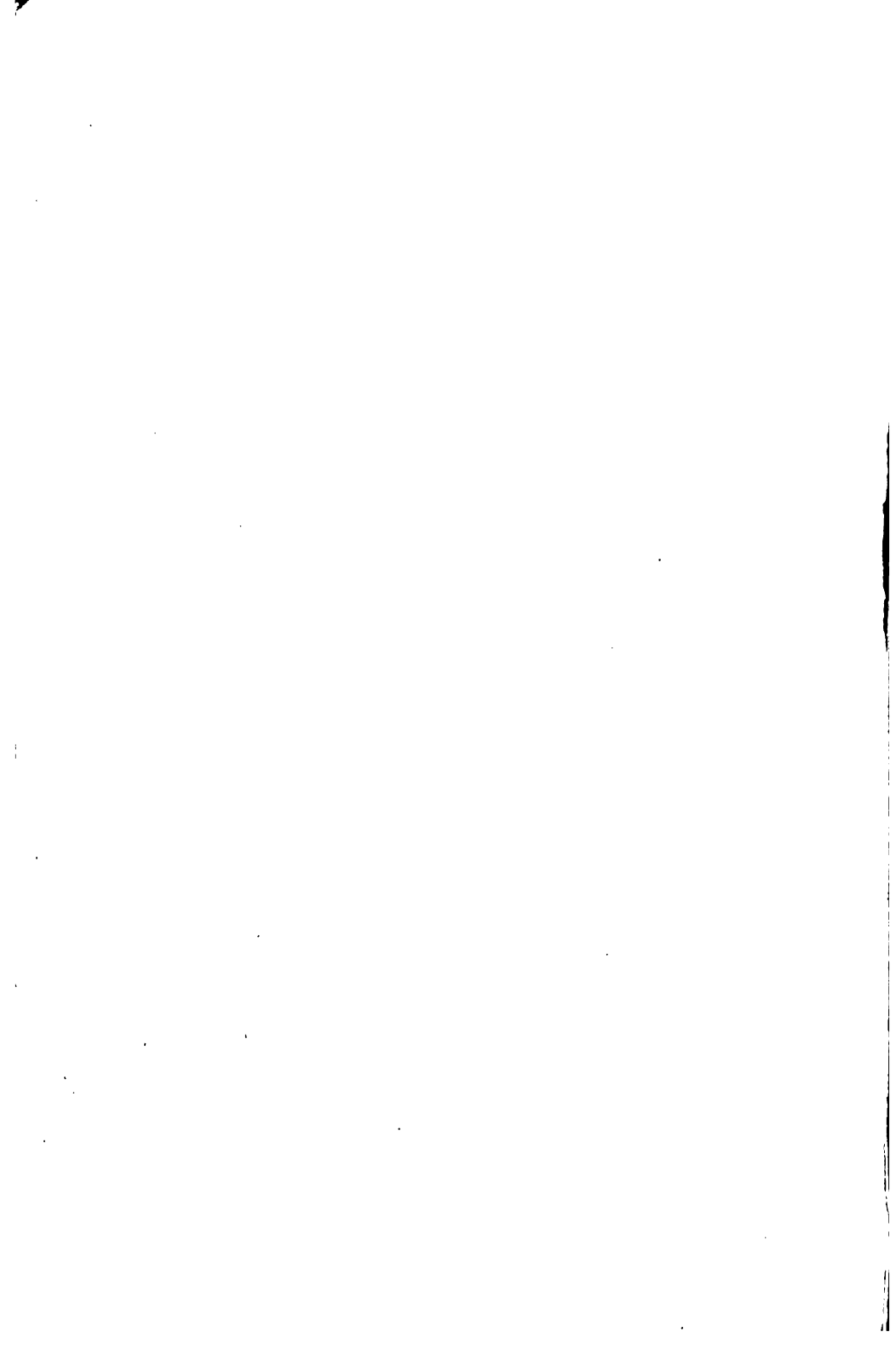
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CHARLES HANSON TOWNE

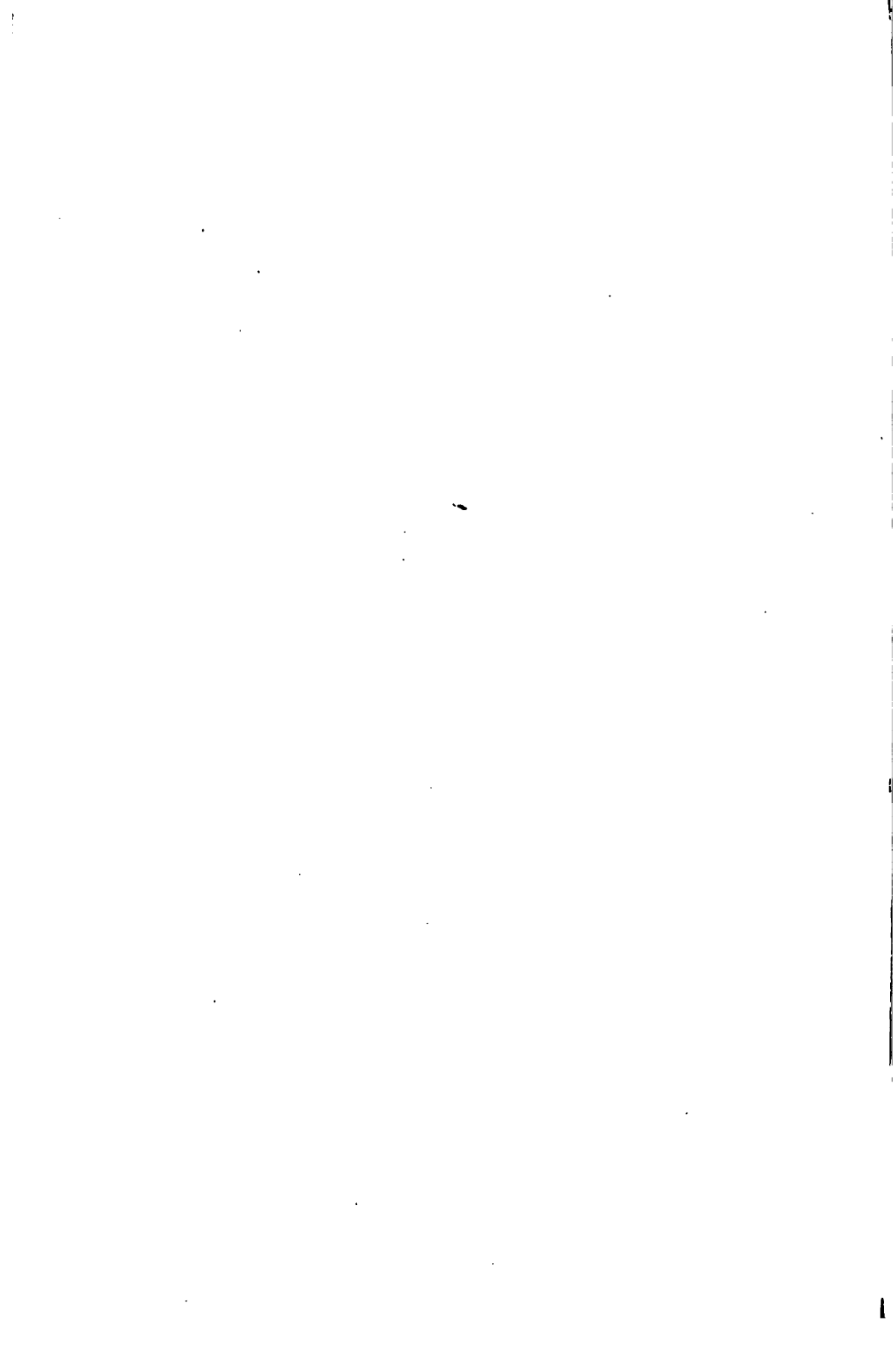


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## THE QUIET SINGER



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# THE QUIET SINGER

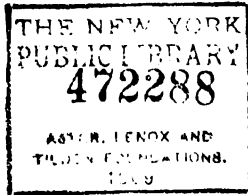
## AND OTHER POEMS

BY  
CHARLES HANSON TOWNE



NEW YORK  
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1908



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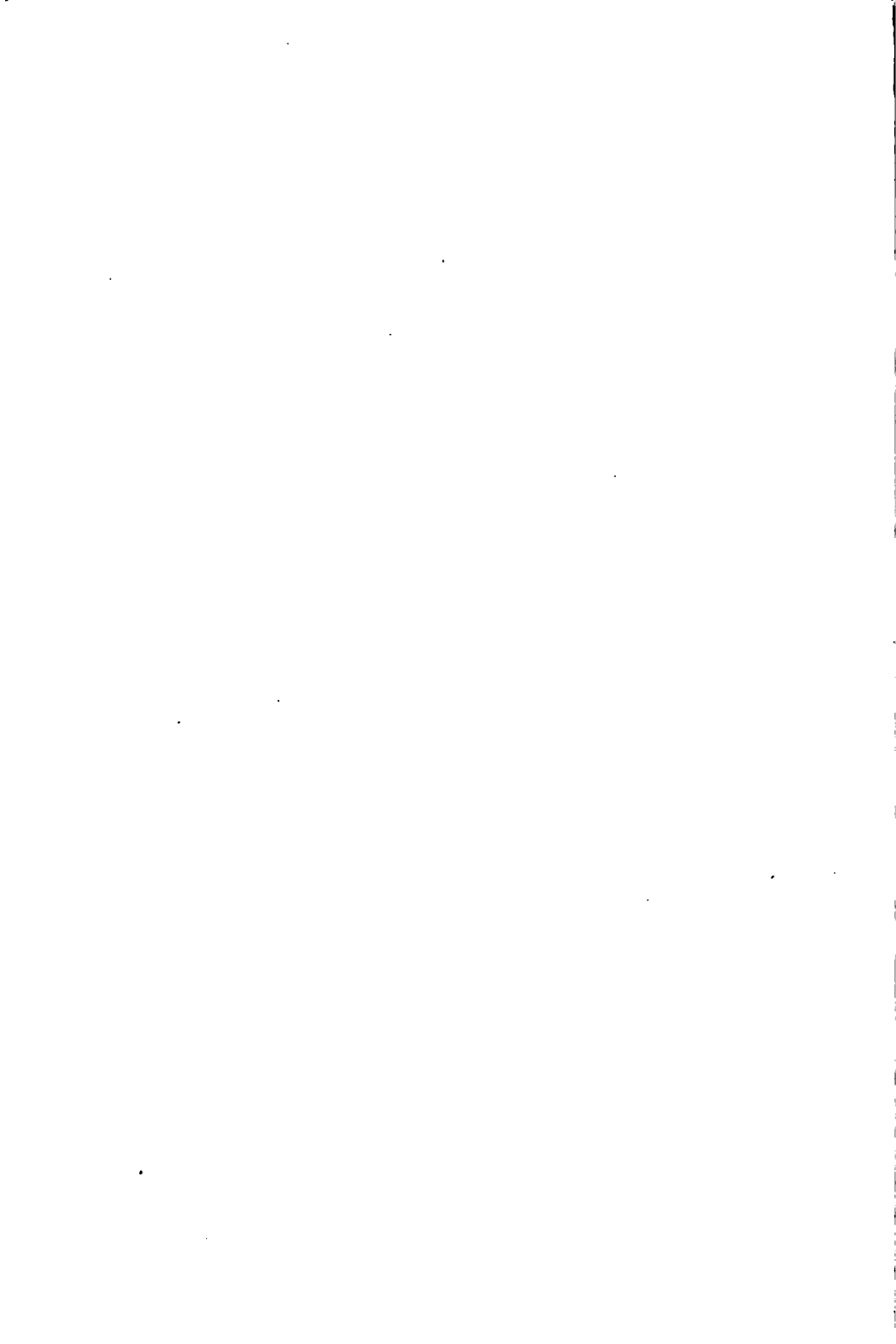
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TO MY MOTHER



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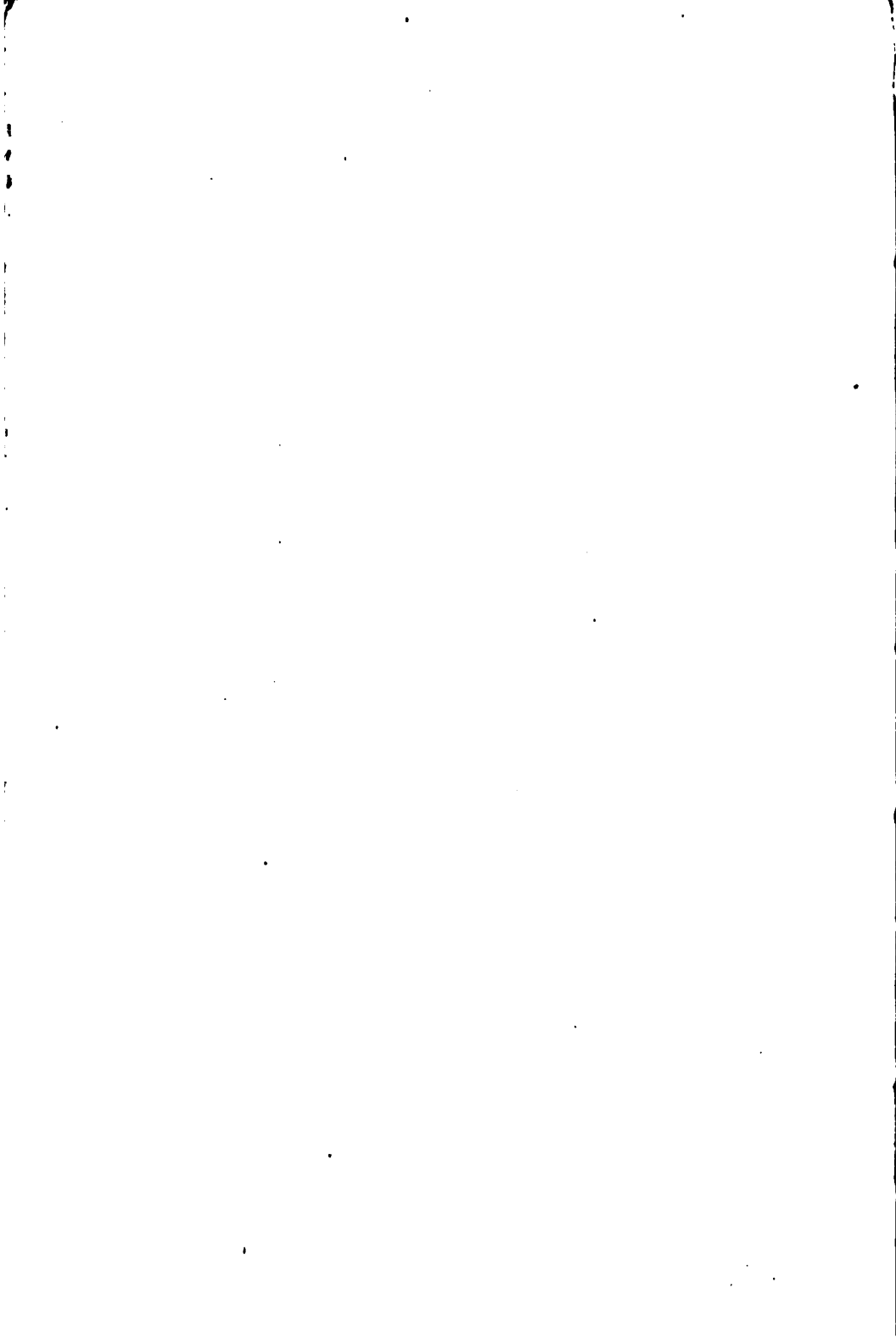
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## THE QUIET SINGER

*(Ave! Francis Thompson)*

HE had been singing—but I had not heard his  
voice ;  
He had been weaving lovely dreams of song,  
O many a morning long.  
But I, remote and far,  
Under an alien star,  
Listened to other singers, other birds,  
And other silver words.  
But does the skylark, singing sweet and clear,  
Beg the cold world to hear?  
Rather he sings for very rapture of singing,  
At dawn, or in the blue, mild Summer noon,  
Knowing that, late or soon,  
His wealth of beauty, and his high notes, ringing  
Above the earth, will make some heart rejoice.  
He sings, albeit alone,  
Spendthrift of each pure tone,  
Hoarding no single song,  
No cadence wild and strong.

[ 1 ]

## THE QUIET SINGER

But one day, from a friend far overseas,  
As if upon the breeze,  
There came the teeming wonder of his words—  
A golden troop of birds,  
Caged in a little volume made to love;  
Singing, singing,  
Flinging, flinging  
Their breaking hearts on mine, and swiftly bring-  
ing  
Tears, and the peace thereof.

How the world woke anew!  
How the days broke anew!  
Before my tear-blind eyes a tapestry  
I seemed to see,  
Woven of all the dreams dead or to be.  
Hills, hills of song, Springs of eternal bloom,  
Autumns of golden pomp and purple gloom  
Were hung upon his loom.  
Winters of pain, roses with awful thorns,  
Yet wondrous faith in God's dew-drenchèd  
morns—  
These, all these I saw,  
With that ecstatic awe  
Wherewith one looks into Eternity.

And then I knew that, though I had not heard  
His voice before,  
His quiet singing, like some quiet bird  
At some one's distant door,

## AND OTHER POEMS

Had made my own more sweet ; had made it more  
Lovely, in one of God's miraculous ways.

I knew then why the days

Had seemed more perfect to me when the Spring  
Came with old burgeoning ;

For somewhere in the world his voice was raised,  
And somewhere in the world his heart was break-  
ing ;

And never a flower but knew it, sweetly taking  
Beauty more high and noble for his sake,  
As a whole wood grows lovelier for the wail  
Of one sad nightingale.

Yet, if the Springs long past

Seemed wonderful before I heard his voice,

I tremble at the beauty I shall see

In seasons still to be,

Now that his songs are mine while Life shall last.

O now for me

New floods of visions open suddenly. . . .

Rejoice, my heart! Rejoice

That you have heard the Quiet Singer's voice!

## THE QUIET SINGER

### ELUDED

DEEP in the night I heard  
The rain's mysterious word.  
(It was as if an old love spoke, a dead love  
sobbed and stirred.)

Deep in the night the great voice of the rain  
Called at my window-pane.  
(A voice more sad shall nevermore sing at my  
heart again.)

O deep within the night, the last stars gone,  
I heard the rain pass on.  
(No lost love stepped within my room—only the  
pallid dawn!)

## AND OTHER POEMS

### A DISTANT SPRING

I WHO love the Spring so well  
Shall be sleeping, some glad day,  
When her hosts come back to dwell  
In their old, familiar way.

I shall live, alas! no more  
In some distant April hour,  
When the Spring flings wide her door,  
Calling leaf, and bloom, and flower.

I shall sleep—but I shall dream  
In my home beneath the ground,  
And my slumbering heart shall teem  
With its visions deep, profound.

I shall know, ere you will guess  
(Though with life I have no part),  
What new golden loveliness  
Stirs within the old earth's heart.

I shall hear the first soft sound  
When the Spring is born anew,  
And rejoice, beneath the ground,  
At the bliss to come to you.

*THE QUIET SINGER*

And the dreams that I shall dream,  
In that Spring when I am dead,  
May arise until they seem  
Blossoms white and blossoms red!

*AND OTHER POEMS*

SONG

I SAW the day's white rapture  
Die in the sunset's flame,  
But all her shining beauty  
Lives like a deathless name.

Our lamps of joy are wasted,  
Gone is Love's hallowed light;  
But you and I remember  
Through every starlit night.

## THE QUIET SINGER

### THE SILENCES

I LEFT the throbbing city's thundering mart  
For the great patience that the hills impart,  
For the white quiet of the steadfast hills (O the  
great hills' deep heart!)

I left the clamor of the world; I flew  
Back to the olden peace I one time knew,  
Back to the waiting restfulness, back to the heart  
of you!

AND OTHER POEMS

AUGUST IN THE CITY

THE brooding hours, through the dull after-  
noon.

Pause, while a torrid sun flames in the sky.  
(O heart of mine, dream of a long, cool dune,  
Where breezes wander by!)

Hemmed in by granite walls, the very paves  
Grow worn and weary with the ceaseless heat.  
(O heart, dream of a shore where foam-flecked  
waves  
Surge, crash, and wildly beat!)

The sad hours creep toward the dim light of  
dusk—  
Ah! how each laggard moment slowly goes!  
(O heart, dream of a garden filled with musk  
And the sweet scent of rose!)

The sun goes down at last, and lo! a breeze  
Pours through the mighty cavern of the streets.  
(O sleeping heart, dream of unsheltered seas  
Where the glad, fresh rain beats!)

## THE QUIET SINGER

### THE LOVER—IN APRIL

THOU hast come back to me!  
(Thou who didst die a year ago,  
And slept so many days beneath the snow)  
Thou hast come back to me!  
Now that the buds break on the hawthorn-tree,  
And the old gladness of the earth revives,  
Thou hast come back to me  
In the dear hyacinth and white anemone.

The Spring's great resurrection is thine own!  
This fragrance of young blossoms is thy breath;  
This silence is thy spiritual tread—  
Thou art no longer dead!  
Who is it, dear, that saith  
Thy body is in the bondage of strong Death?  
Nay, from the darkness, on the light winds blown,  
Thou hast come back to me  
In the dear hyacinth and white anemone!

## AND OTHER POEMS

### SPRING RAPTURE

ONCE more the Spring's exultant joy  
And flowery dream have come to pass;  
Once more the birth of hawthorn white,  
The green revival of the grass.

Again the pageant of the leaves,  
The fragrance of the cherry-boughs;  
Again the April glamour comes,  
Again the young Spring's wild carouse!

O heart of mine, once more for you  
The world awakes with bloom and song;  
Hushed are the voices of old Grief,  
And vanished is the face of Wrong.

The April pæan rings again,  
Spring's flowery dream has come to pass,  
And who shall weep when Love has given  
The green revival of the grass?

## THE QUIET SINGER

### THE BOAST

I DO not need you now! Thus do I end  
Our days together, O belovèd friend;  
Thus do I shake all remnants of the past  
Out of my life; and thus I say at last,  
"I do not need you now!"

I do not need you now! Our love is done,  
And in this hour of parting, one by one  
I watch the years we spent together fade  
Into the cold oblivion I have made.  
I do not need you now!

I do not need you now! The faith is gone  
That made our love, from dawn to silver dawn,  
A thing most wonderful. Bravely I cry  
(Exulting in the shame of my deep lie!),  
"I do not need you now!"

## AND OTHER POEMS

### LOVE, THE VICTOR

TIME was, O Love, when I a vassal knelt,  
Obedient, at the footstool of thy throne;  
When all my life was thine—yea, every thought  
Thy very own.

Yet, when I hungered most, and prayed that thou  
Wouldst give to me some little that I gave,  
Thou didst but mock me, knowing what I was—  
Thy willing slave.

Yet, though fast bound in shackle and in chain,  
Pride rose in me, and thou wert cast aside;  
And long I blessed the day when thou from me  
Wentst forth and died.

How long ago it was I broke my thrall!  
How long since I have kept apart from thee,  
Vowing that nevermore my heart should know  
Thy tyranny!

And yet to-day I felt the old desire,  
After long years of freedom from thy reign;  
And I have dreamed, full many a night, of Love's  
Exquisite pain.

## *THE QUIET SINGER*

No strength of mine can hold thee back, O Love!  
I thought that I was safe beyond thy will;  
But after long, long years, lo! here am I,  
Obedient still!

## AND OTHER POEMS

### THE FOOTFARER

NOW that Spring is in the land,  
Now that April wakes the wood,  
I would take my scrip in hand,  
Roving with old Solitude.

I would leave the haunts of men,  
All the rabble of the mart;  
I would be a child again,  
Close upon my Mother's heart.

Being kin to every star  
In the marvellous Spring nights,  
I would journey forth afar,  
Drinking in long-lost delights.

For the world was made for me,  
I who love her music so;  
I was meant for Arcady,  
Where the April tides sing low.

I would lie upon the breast  
Of my Mother all day long—  
She who eases my unrest  
With her musical low song.

## *THE QUIET SINGER*

She it is who calls me forth  
When the Springtide winds begin,  
That, in faring south or north,  
I can cease to think of sin ;

Yea, and even when the rain  
Of sweet April falls on me,  
I can hear a loved refrain  
In the welcome minstrelsy ;

Glad because I am without,  
Following my vagrant will,  
Putting all my cares to rout  
When I feel the first new thrill.

Mother ! I would forth with you,  
I would take your outstretched hand ;  
Let us fare amid the dew,  
Now that Spring is in the land.

*AND OTHER POEMS*

MIRACLE

THAT in your absence I can feel this thrill  
Pulsing my inmost soul ; that I can know  
Such wonder and such ecstasy, until  
I marvel at the heights whereto I go,

Deem it not strange, beloved ; every hour  
Is white with consecration pure and true ;  
Then, wherefore wakes my heart like some glad  
flower ?  
O hush, and hark ! There came a thought of  
you !

## *THE QUIET SINGER*

### A MOTHER

**I**T rained all day the day she died,  
And yet she thought it sweet and fair;  
She said the sunlight kissed her hair,  
And then she slept, all satisfied.

It rained all day; she woke again,  
And whispered that the sky was blue.  
Ah me! thank God she never knew  
How cold and dreary fell the rain.

So like her life! It rained all day,  
And yet she thought it all was bright;  
She loved and toiled through day and night—  
She never thought the skies were gray.

## AND OTHER POEMS

### THE KING

**I** *AM the king of a wide domain, and you deem  
it a wonderful thing;  
But the kingly height is a terrible height—God  
pity the lonely king!*

Heed this, O you who envy me my purple, and  
pomp, and clan;  
Thank Him who made you, and made us all, that  
He made you a Common Man!

What of the pride and the glory of name, the  
absolute wealth of the land,  
When what I need and crave the most is the  
clasp of a comrade's hand?

But king am I of a vast domain, and crowned by  
a foolish fate,  
While a foolish world bows down to me and dares  
to call me great.

My ships fare forth to the open sea, my mariners  
speed afar,  
Where the sweet adventure, the risk, and the loss,  
and the wonderful conflict are.

## *THE QUIET SINGER*

My soldiers fly to the far-off hills at the sound of  
the cannon's call,  
But the helpless king, and the lonely king, he  
bides in his palace hall.

O for a glimpse of the wide, great world, and a  
taste of the life that is true—  
A taste of the life that is yours, and yours! O for  
the larger view!

To march, uncrowned, with the eager throng that  
moves on the white highway,  
To know their mirth, their tears, their loves, the  
hopes of their golden day;

To sing with them, and to lift his voice with the  
horde of the Common Men—  
This is the prayer the monarch prays, again,  
again, and again!

Out in the heart of the golden Spring I know  
where banners wave  
More bright than the pennons that are mine own,  
more beautiful and brave.

Crown me with freedom of the hills, and place  
upon my lip  
A song of the honest brotherhood and the noble  
fellowship!

AND OTHER POEMS

Make me the equal of other men! O let it not be  
said

No humble heart may walk with me the foolish  
height I tread!

Let me out where the teeming flood pours toward  
Life's open sea,

And let me walk the way of man with all hu-  
manity.

Bitter the heart that beats in my breast when I  
hear the clamor of life,

And know that the world so far from me gives  
me no part in its strife.

They prate the joy of rulers; yea, they cry the  
glory of kings,

But few may know what loneliness about a great  
throne clings.

Sadly I reign in my palace place, and none may  
understand

How much I crave the world's turmoil and the  
clasp of a comrade's hand.

*I am the king of a wide domain, and you deem it  
a wonderful thing;*

*But the kingly height is a terrible height—God  
pity the lonely king!*

## THE QUIET SINGER

### A ROSE WHISPERS

I AM the flower within her garden-close  
She cast aside;  
Ah! had she plucked me, verily, God knows  
I had not died.

I would have fought a battle with strong Death,  
And bloomed anew,  
Finding sweet resurrection in her breath  
The long day through;

And had she laid me on her trembling heart,  
New fire had sprung  
Into my crimson petals' every part,  
And made me young.

Yea, I for her had lived again; but O,  
She passed me by,  
And now, neglected, in the night I go  
Softly—to die!

AND OTHER POEMS

AWAITED

**A**LTHOUGH I dare to say  
My heart untarnished is from day to day,  
'Tis not, O Love, that any strength of mine  
Has kept all white the shrine.

But as I now look back  
Across the years that span the weary track,  
All the dear deeds I ever strove to do  
Were done because of you.

All the white thoughts I had  
Were but pure flowers, one day to make you glad;  
Every improving act, each little grace,  
Humbly, dear one, I trace

Back to my hope of you,  
Long, long before your wondrous face I knew.  
Ah! your white coming, silent and unseen,  
Made me and kept me clean!

## THE QUIET SINGER

### A BALLAD OF THE NATIVITY

NOW it was Mary dreamed this dream,  
Ere yet her Child was born  
In that poor place in Bethlehem,  
In that poor stall forlorn,  
Before the dark of night had fled  
From the white face of morn.

She fell asleep, and dreamed this dream,  
That filled her heart with fear—  
That she had died that One might live  
Whose life was very dear,  
And that she never saw His face  
Or dried His earliest tear.

She dreamed that her own life went out—  
Her life divinely sweet—  
Ere she could press His little hands  
Or kiss His little feet,  
Or know the bliss that was to make  
Her womanhood complete.

She dreamed she died before she knew  
The trembling joy to say,  
"I am a mother—I, whose life  
So bleak was yesterday!  
I know at last that perfect hour  
For which all women pray!"

*AND OTHER POEMS*

O strangely came this dream to her,  
This dream of utter woe,  
While through the dark Judean night,  
Above the wastes of snow,  
A star flamed in the midnight heaven  
And set the East aglow.

And ere the pallid dawn had come  
To break her sacred rest,  
She wakened, with a startled moan,  
And tears the bitterest,  
And lo! she felt two little hands  
Clasped close upon her breast!

## THE QUIET SINGER

### UNDERSTANDING

**F**LASH of steel and crash of drum—  
Love that way has never come.  
But adown some quiet night  
She has winged her silent flight,  
And no heart but failed to hear  
Her soft presence drawing near.

Boom of guns in long array—  
Love has never gone that way.  
But with quiet step and slow,  
Hand upon her pale lips—so  
Love goes out in some white dawn—  
O we know when she has gone!

*AND OTHER POEMS*

THE DEPTH OF LOVE

**B**ECAUSE he brought no tears to her dear  
grave,  
Many and many there were  
Who whispered, when no single sign he gave,  
"He never cared for her."

But down within the silence of his soul  
A surging ocean swept;  
Yet none could see the current onward roll,  
The tides that never slept.

Because I stand in silence when your eyes  
Look softly into mine;  
Because no words to my poor lips arise,  
Because I give no sign;

There are, perchance, those who would dare to  
say  
There is no heart in me.  
Belovèd, let them cry! Be glad that they  
Can never sound our sea.

## THE QUIET SINGER

### UNANSWERED

HOW shall I know her, God, in that great  
world,

After the grief of this is past and gone?  
How shall I know her when our souls are hurled  
Like atoms thro' the night? On that white dawn  
How shall I know it is her face that I shall look  
upon?

Wan spirits, we shall journey thro' Thy land,  
The mist-like wraiths of what we used to be;  
O shall I know the pressure of her hand,  
And shall I recognize her call to me,  
As I do now? Is love the same thro' all eter-  
nity?

How shall I know her, God? I ask but this,  
To be assured—a child who is dismayed.  
Let me be told that I shall feel her kiss.  
. . . There is no answer! Lo! my faith is  
weighed.  
Ah! somehow I shall know her, God. Hush!  
Love is not afraid!

## AND OTHER POEMS

### SURRENDER

SO hard I strove to crowd you from my heart,  
You who once loved, but love me now no  
more;

Yet all the weary night your face would start  
Out of the blackness and the midnight's door,  
And smile—to mock me!—as it did of yore.

Why is it that your name is on my tongue  
When the gray dawn first creeps across the  
hill?

Why is it, ere the lark his song has sung,  
Your voice is in my brain, and singing still  
The old, old love that taunts my weakened will?

There is no shore that can resist the sea!  
O I have striven to forget, in vain;  
So give me now the olden memory,  
Come, if you will, through distance and bleak  
rain;  
Come, if you will, although you bring me pain!

## *THE QUIET SINGER*

### RAIN ON THE ROOF

**L** OUD on my roof the regiments of rain  
March with their old insistence, and I hear  
Troop after troop, column and troop again,  
Sweep by before Dawn's shining hosts appear.

O armies of the night, your rhythmic tramp  
Lures me at last to the dim bourne of Sleep,  
And you and I find peace in some far camp  
Where only Silence and her legions creep.

AND OTHER POEMS

THE HOUSE OF THE HEART

I HAVE made empty all my heart for you!  
I have shut out the mad noise of the world,  
Closed every window, made the doors fast, too;  
And from each chamber to the winds have  
hurled  
Old thoughts, old base desires, old sins, old  
stains;  
Yea, swept my heart as all the earth is swept by  
April rains.

Down the long corridors there is no sound!  
I wait but for your entrance through the door,  
Your footfall in my heart's great vacant ground,  
Your voice to sing and sing forevermore—  
Your voice alone to make the old house thrill  
With the vast knowledge that your love wakes all  
that once was still!

There shall be gladness when you come to me!  
Your thoughts, not mine, shall enter in this  
place.  
O Love! behold how white each room shall be,  
And you shall make all whiter of your grace!  
Come to this quiet house, this heart of mine—  
It is no longer part of me, but all is thine, is  
thine!

## THE QUIET SINGER

### REMOTE

SOMEWHERE, perchance, there is a love  
That one day I may gain;  
But O, it is so very far,  
Through darkness and the rain!

And yet more distant than the dream  
Of joy that still may be  
Is that old love gone softly down  
The aisles of Memory!

*AND OTHER POEMS*

THE GLADNESS OF SPRING

WHEN Spring, with blossom-haunted lanes,  
With sudden gusts of rippling rains,  
Came dancing down the glad young year,  
How soon my heart forgot its fear!

When I had heard the lyric note  
That floated from the robin's throat,  
How soon the sad song in my breast  
Sought a deep silence, a deep rest!

Now who had dreamed the April rain  
Could cleanse a heart of all its pain?  
And who had thought one little bird  
Could hush a soul's discordant word?

## *THE QUIET SINGER*

### A SUNSET

**F**AR in the gold-embroidered west  
The round and red sun lay,  
Like a great wound upon the breast  
Of the slow-dying day.

Night, and a murmur from the east;  
I heard the wind's voice roll  
Out of the dark, a solemn priest,  
Speeding the day's white soul.

## AND OTHER POEMS

### ESTRANGEMENT

**I**T was so hard to say good-bye,  
To drift apart from you ;  
But harder still to live the lie  
That swept the long years through.

O better far it were that we  
Down different paths should stray ;  
Better that we should part than be  
So close, yet far away !

## THE QUIET SINGER

### DEATH AT MORNING

SHE died when dawn was sweeping o'er the  
land,  
When morning-glories lit the gleaming wall;  
And one who watched her, holding her pale hand,  
Whispered, "Alas! that she should miss it all!"

The early sun, risen from his dark night,  
Flamed his great banners when she went away;  
And one said, "Lo! at coming of the light  
She has gone forth, and lost the beauteous  
day."

But she, from her poor mortal house of pain  
Gladly released, went singing to God's place,  
And cried, "Dear Lord, after the bleak world-  
rain,  
I cannot bear the brightness of Thy face!"

## AND OTHER POEMS

### RENEWAL

**A**PRIL, when I heard  
Your lyrical low word,  
And when upon the hawthorn hedge your first  
white blossoms stirred,

Something strangely came—  
Something I cannot name—  
And touched my heart, and cleansed my soul with  
a reviving flame.

When the yellow gleam  
Of your hosts that stream—  
Jonquil, buttercup, and crocus—made the world  
a golden dream,

Something, April, said  
To my heart that bled—  
Bled with old remembrance—"Lo! the grief-  
strewn days are fled!"

*Sursum corda!* Now,  
When blooms the apple-bough,  
April, of your pity, let your light rain kiss my  
brow;

*THE QUIET SINGER*

Heal me, if you will;  
Bathe my heart until  
I am one with your first primrose or the shining  
daffodil!

*AND OTHER POEMS*

**A MAN'S PRAYER**

**I** DO not crave that deathless fame  
That is the valiant soldier's part;  
I only wish to write my name  
Within a woman's heart;

To make my love so perfect seem  
The world shall say, my glad days **through**,  
"That life he lived—it was a dream  
Too wondrous to be true!"

## THE QUIET SINGER

### A SONG OF CITY TRAFFIC

I HAVE heard the roar and clamor through the  
city's crowded ways  
Of the never-ending pageant moving down the  
busy days—  
Coaches, wagons, hearses, engines, clanging cars,  
and thundering drays!

I have watched them moving past me as the day  
began to dawn;  
I have watched them creeping onward when the  
sun's last light was gone,  
Like a serpent long and sinuous, gliding on, and  
on, and on.

Never, since I can remember, has this long pro-  
cession ceased;  
Rather has the surging torrent ever lengthened  
and increased,  
And the human traffic changed not—prince and  
beggar, fool and priest.

They have marched, and still are marching,  
through the city's wilderness—  
O the sadness of their going who shall know or  
who shall guess?

## AND OTHER POEMS

Prophet, lady, sage, and merchant, cap-and-bells  
in wisdom's dress!

Ah! poor throngs of the great city, drops within  
that mighty stream,  
When the night descends upon you and the streets  
are all agleam,  
Of some distant hills of silence do your worn  
hearts never dream?

When the brazen voice of traffic and the loud call  
of the mart  
Strangle all the hope within you, bruise your soul  
and break your heart,  
Do you think of some far valley where life plays  
another part?

Sometimes in your startled slumbers, ere the morn  
comes up again,  
Do you dream of some blue mountain or some  
wonderful green glen,  
Where the silver voice of silence calls the weary  
world of men?

O perhaps you dream, as I do, of the quiet wood-  
land ways;  
But the long procession lures you through the  
fleeting nights and days,  
And you miss the old, old beauty for which still  
your spirit prays;

## *THE QUIET SINGER*

Miss it all, and, missing, weep not ; join once more  
the bands of trade,  
Join again the city's tumult, that long clamoring  
parade—  
Join once more the foolish struggle which not  
God, but man, has made !

Losing love and losing friendship, making life  
but wounds and scars ;  
Missing beauty and calm rapture, and the shelter  
of the stars—  
Poor, sad mortals, hearing only noise of wheels  
and clang of cars !

## AND OTHER POEMS

### SELFISHNESS

THERE is so much that you can give to me—  
I cannot bring you anything at all,  
Save worship and the little, tender words  
My lips let fall.

But you—oh, you can feed my hungry heart,  
And you can fill my chalice soul with wine,  
Till I grow drunk with drinking, marvelling  
At love like thine.

How selfishly I come to beg all this,  
I who can give you nothing, dear, at all,  
Save worship and the little, grateful words  
My lips let fall.

## THE QUIET SINGER

### REMEMBRANCE

LOVE was with me yesterday—  
In the dusk she crept away;  
But I am light-hearted yet,  
Since I never can forget.

All the world may marvel why  
Joyful with great joy am I;  
None may know who cannot say,  
"Love was with me yesterday!"

AND OTHER POEMS

AERE PERENNIUS

AS long as the stars of God  
Hang steadfast in the sky,  
And the blossoms 'neath the sod  
Awake when Spring is nigh;  
As long as the nightingale  
Sings love-songs to the rose,  
And the Winter wind in the vale  
Makes moan o'er the virgin snows—  
As long as these things be  
I would tell my love for thee!

As long as the rose of June  
Bursts forth in crimson fire,  
And the mellow harvest-moon  
Shines over hill and spire;  
As long as heaven's dew  
At morning kisses the sod;  
As long as you are you,  
And I know that God is God—  
As long as these things be  
I would tell my love for thee!

## THE QUIET SINGER

### THE GREAT AND SILENT THINGS

HOW silently the years, in long procession,  
Come gliding down the corridors of Time  
to us!

O quietly they come and take possession  
Of our dear youth, and weigh us with oppression;  
How great they seem, and how sublime to us!

How softly Love into the heart comes creeping!  
How wonderfully low is her command to us!  
She wakes the soul that erstwhile lay a-sleeping,  
She dries the eyes that were but lately weeping,  
Revealing all her Promised Land to us.

And Death! O with a velvet tread she finds us,  
And teaches us her awful lore and mystery;  
Like sheaves of wheat are we what time she binds  
us,  
And in a little sheet of whiteness winds us—  
And this is all of our poor history!

O we who loudly cry our names in chorus  
Across the mighty years, shall sooner, later,  
Go humbly back upon the tide that bore us  
To this brief life, as men have gone before us,  
Softly to God, silent to our Creator!

*AND OTHER POEMS*

DISTANCES

I HAD a friend who went away  
Over the distant sea,  
But hill and tide can never hide  
His gentle face from me.

I had a friend—he broke my heart,  
Yet every shining day  
We meet, but nevermore clasp hands. . . .  
How far he is away!

## THE QUIET SINGER

### HAUNTED

THERE came a whisper in the night,  
A little cry across the years ;  
And I who heard, in deep affright,  
Awakened with unnumbered fears.

"It is some deed that I have done,  
Some sin I wrought long, long ago ;  
But hush ! am I the only one ?  
Wherefore am I then troubled so ?

"For all men do some evil deed,  
And some men falter, some men fall ;  
Do ghosts of Selfishness and Greed  
Come back, O God, to haunt them all ?"

Then came a whisper in the night,  
A little cry across the years ;  
And I who heard, in deep affright,  
Listened with wild, unnumbered fears.

*"I am the ghost of that pure deed  
You might have done, but did not do ;  
I am the ghost of that good seed  
You might have sown when Life was new.*

AND OTHER POEMS

*"And this it is that haunts you now,  
That deed undone, that seed unsown;  
Too late, too late to take the plough,  
The Spring is fled, the May is flown!"*

And this I heard amid the night,  
This voice that called across the years,  
And when the dawn came, silver-white,  
I was companioned with my tears.

## THE QUIET SINGER

### VILLANELLE

THE lilies whisper in the park,  
Pale watchers in the heavy night,  
Wan ghosts that haunt the fragrant dark.

How pure they are! Their figures stark  
Stand as if waiting for Death's flight—  
The lilies whisper in the park.

Beneath the blue electric arc  
They crowd in long battalions bright,  
Wan ghosts that haunt the fragrant dark.

I lean and listen, wait and hark;  
Faint phrases float on pinions light—  
The lilies whisper in the park.

The city sleeps. I pause to mark  
These spirits marshaled for my sight,  
Wan ghosts that haunt the fragrant dark.

Who knows the language of the lark?  
Who gleans one word from flowers white?  
The lilies whisper in the park,  
Wan ghosts that haunt the fragrant dark.

*AND OTHER POEMS*

I COUNT THE DAYS

I COUNT the days, beloved; but not those  
When you are absent, though my heart well  
knows  
That they are bleak indeed. Rather I say  
Unselfishly, as drifts each laggard day,  
"Long, long ago, in Love's eternal Spring,  
We sang together, and new hours can bring  
No greater rapture." I am ever glad  
Of those lost hours of beauty that we had;  
And if within my heart I always hold  
The memory of their shining threads of gold,  
I fear not when you tread far-distant ways. . . .  
O Love, our wondrous past! I count the days!

## THE QUIET SINGER

### FULFILMENT

THIS was my dream in May—to have one  
bloom,

Fragrant with apple-scent and Springtide rain,  
Live thro' the bleakness of the Autumn gloom,  
Awakening all beauty in my room,  
Hiding the dismal hills, quenching dull pain.

This was my dream in youth—to have you near  
When the dark hours of age had crept on me;  
To have you at my side when twilight drear  
Told that the light of day would disappear;  
To have you love me, O unswervingly!

These dreams were mine! . . . Dear heart, the  
night is nigh,  
No single flow'r blooms thro' November chill,  
And you are vanished, lost—ah! who knows why?  
But hush! Far, far within the vaulted sky,  
One golden bud—a star—smiles o'er the hill!

*AND OTHER POEMS*

RESURRECTION

WHEN one had gone away  
To join the quiet dead,  
Bleak, bleak for me the day,  
And dark the clouds o'erhead.  
"Her voice I shall not hear again,  
Nor see her smile," I said.

Yet when the Spring winds came  
The sad earth to beguile,  
I heard one call my name  
Whose voice was lost erewhile;  
And when the early violets blew,  
Dear God, I saw her smile!

## THE QUIET SINGER

### TILL EULENSPIEGEL

**E**ULENSPIEGEL, merry lad,  
What a laughing life you had!  
Prank and jest were yours by right  
Or at noontide or at night,  
And the simple tricks you played  
On the spinster and the jade  
Only helped sad hearts to be  
Lighter through felicity.

If you knocked upon the door  
Of a house you'd missed before,  
How the little home would wake,  
Laughing for your laughter's sake!  
Never since Time was begun  
Has Life frowned on harmless fun;  
Never has there been a day  
Filled too full of foolish play.

Let the somber folk and dense  
Laugh at your young innocence;  
Tricks that they have never guessed  
(Many a little quip and jest)

*AND OTHER POEMS*

Play upon them till they take  
Long, long leave of grieving. Make  
Plots and plans of such design  
As will cause old eyes to shine.

Trip your way into my heart,  
Eulenspiegel! Let me part  
With the sorrow and the tears  
That are marching down the years.  
Play your pranks with all of us,  
In that way felicitous,  
Till the darkness of our night  
Blooms with laughter and delight.

## THE QUIET SINGER

### THE POET

BACK of his splendid song, O think of the  
songs unsung!  
Back of his painted dreams, the dreams that he  
never reveals!  
Behind each lyric of rapture  
The songs that he cannot capture,  
Save for his own delight, to keep his heart still  
young!

But the songs that he never can sing—  
Children created of one glad song that tells us  
what he feels—  
Some day they shall be uttered,  
When far his soul has fluttered,  
Sung by an unborn singer in a new and wonder-  
ful Spring!

*AND OTHER POEMS*

THE FLAME

**O** MOTH, that yearns for me,  
The whole world pities thee,  
Foredoomed on heedless wing,  
By mad fire-worshipping.

But sadder is my fate,  
Who, when the night is late,  
See thee in love come nigh,  
At my caress to die!

When I would lend thee aid,  
To death thou art betrayed;  
Yea, I that love thee well,  
I am thy heaven and hell!

## *THE QUIET SINGER*

### IN THE MEADOWS OF THE SKY

**W**HEN the great sower, Night,  
    Lets down his sable bars,  
He goes into his endless fields  
    To plant his seed, the stars.

And then the wintry Dawn  
    Comes with her icy hand,  
And blights with snowy clouds the flowers  
    In that wide, heavenly land.

## AND OTHER POEMS

### THE MOSQUES

THERE was a flower in ancient Fez  
That (so the glowing legend says)  
Has never lost its matchless light  
From Summer dawn to Winter night,  
Since Allah cast his pitying glance  
Upon the city's wide expanse,  
And, with all mercy in his eye,  
Said, "One white flower shall never die."

So from the city's forest maze  
Pure alabaster domes upraise  
Their gleaming beauty through the dawn,  
Or when the dusk of day is gone;  
White flowers that blossom through the years,  
And hush a people's solemn fears,  
Pale blooms of wonder that shall last  
Till Time, and Life, and Death are past.

## THE QUIET SINGER

### THE WOMAN'S WAY

THERE are things, I know, that are sad and strange,

As the world swings round in the old-time way ;  
O Life is the same, though the seasons change,  
And laughter and tears make our little day.  
But one sad thing is the saddest of all,  
Filling women's hearts with old regrets—  
They take their love as a gift from above—  
A woman remembers, a man—forgets !

You may say what you will, a woman's heart  
Counts all as loss till she loves and lives  
In the golden hours that seem to start  
A new white world ; and she always gives  
All that she has, or dreams, or knows—  
All that she feels—and she never regrets.  
She gives her all, yet her meed is small—  
A woman remembers, a man—forgets !

Men love to-day—and laugh to-night,  
Forgetting a heart may break the while ;  
A woman loves in her strength and might,  
A man forgets—at another smile !

*AND OTHER POEMS*

And the sad, mad world turns swiftly round,  
And thus shall it be till the last sun sets;  
A woman takes love as a gift from above—  
A woman remembers, a man—forgets!

## THE QUIET SINGER

### IN THE NIGHT

I HEARD the footfall of the hail;  
The armies of the sky  
Were coming down amid the gale,  
And rank on rank marched by.

I heard the thunder's cannonade,  
The beating of his drum;  
I saw the lightning's flashing blade—  
The hosts of heaven had come!

The mighty legions crossed the roofs  
And stormed the distant hill;  
Faint grew the sound of tramping hoofs,  
And lo! then all was still.

At morn I saw dead crimson leaves  
Far o'er the wide world tossed;  
And now the lonely Autumn grieves  
For all that she has lost.

*AND OTHER POEMS*

HOPE

**T**HE weariest watch must sometime end,  
The dreariest Winter must one day close,  
And under the cover that wraps the earth  
Sleeps the Summer rose.

Did the Spring e'er fail of its mission sweet,  
After the rush of the Northern snows?  
Then why should we care, since under the earth  
Sleeps the Summer rose?

## THE QUIET SINGER

### LOVE OF BEAUTY

WHO loves all beauty loves beyond that we  
see;

The gods give him a vision doubly blest;  
He sees the bloom upon the hawthorn-tree,  
But blossoms, too, that are not quite expressed.

He hears the music in the lyric rain,  
The lark's enraptured notes that wake the  
dawn;

But far behind them one diviner strain  
That is not uttered till the first is gone.

## AND OTHER POEMS

### THE PROCESSION

THE gray year drifted out  
As a tired love might go,  
And there was no heart to breathe a song  
Across the leagues of snow.  
O the gray, sad year went out, went out,  
And who was there to know?

The glad new year came in  
As a white young love might come,  
And through all the world I heard the sound  
Of welcoming bell and drum.  
O the glad new year came in, came in,  
And hearts with joy grew dumb.

But the new year shall go out  
As the old year went its way;  
And the young love must grow very old,  
Yea, old and wan and gray;  
And thus shall it be till Time and Love  
Die on a Winter's day.

## THE QUIET SINGER

### LOVE AND TIME

I SAID, "Love laughs at Time," before I knew  
The perfect joy of wholly loving you;  
So swift the days went hurrying to that Day  
When we were one—Love swept us on the way.

But now—Time laughs at Love; for swifter yet  
Speed years that seem as hours! The sun will  
set,  
The final curtain fall, our lives be done;  
We will have lived—long years that seemed as  
one!

## AND OTHER POEMS

### AN AUTUMN LEAF

UPON my parchment, sadly old,  
The record lives of Summer's gold;  
And in my veins there lingers now  
The joy of Spring's awakening bough.

So I, like many a human heart  
Wherefrom Life's shining days depart,  
Keep valiantly some remnant yet  
Of dreams we never quite forget.

## THE QUIET SINGER

### ONE MOMENT OF DOUBT

SUPPOSE you should forget,  
After our love and tears,  
To wait for me in that shining place  
That lies behind the years!

Suppose I should forget,  
After my lips are dumb,  
To go to you, O heart of my heart—  
Suppose I should not come!

Never yet was a soul,  
The past remembering,  
But who, one moment in the dark,  
Doubted the coming Spring.

And never yet was one  
Who on this earth has trod,  
But for one instant told his heart  
He doubted even God!

Wherefore then blame me, Love,  
That, mortal that I be,  
I stand one moment, lost, dismayed—  
Then face eternity?

*AND OTHER POEMS*

PARTING

**L**EAVE me some fragment of our love,  
Some remnant of our bliss,  
That I may drink the joy thereof  
Through days more bleak than this.

When Summer fares forth on the wind,  
Do all her blossoms go?  
Nay! Some white flower she leaves behind  
To still the Autumn's woe;

And all her dear remembered grace  
Lives on, because of this;  
So of our love leave me one trace—  
One last and deathless kiss!

## *THE QUIET SINGER*

### THE ROOM

**N**OW that my heart is empty,  
Empty of you,  
I marvel at the fullness  
That once it knew.

How deep the space now vacant,  
How vast and wide!  
Or is it only greater  
Since Love has died?

*AND OTHER POEMS*

AFTER DROUGHT

**T**HERE came an army from the sky,  
And surged across the parchèd plain;  
I saw the hurrying hosts go by—  
The blue battalions of the rain.

O mighty army (bringing peace!)  
How bright your helmets seemed to shine!  
Your cavalcades brought glad release,  
For God was Captain of the line!

## THE QUIET SINGER

### INDIAN SUMMER

WHEN Eve grew old,  
How many a time she must have dreamed  
and dreamed  
Of her lost Eden, with gardens all of gold,  
And Springtide winds that whispered low, and  
streamed  
Quietly through the dim, hushed afternoon;  
And, gray and sad, wept for her vanished June,  
Until some thought of her lost Paradise  
Lighted her old, old eyes!

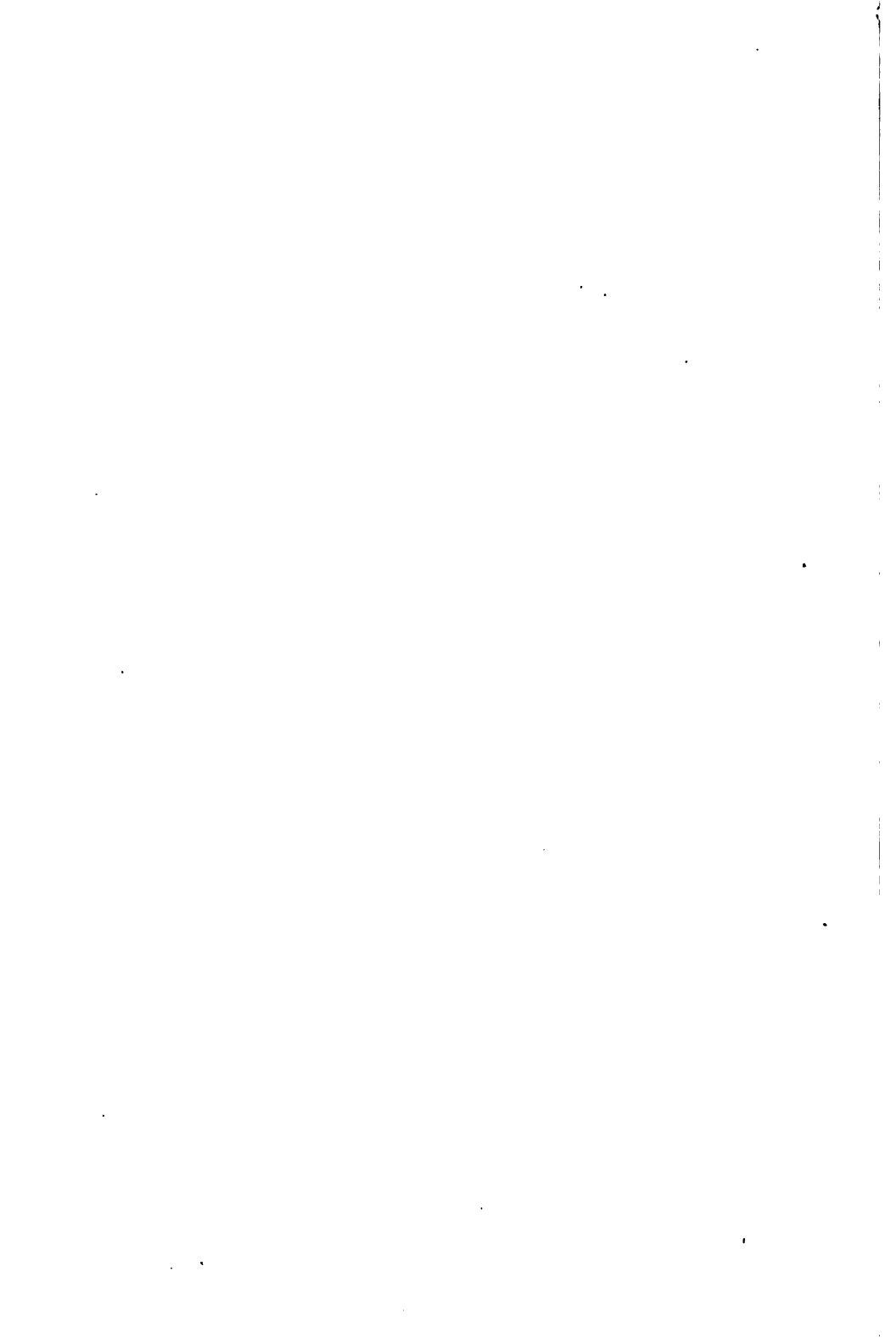
So now the Year,  
Banished from her young Joy and fragrant  
hours,  
Grown feeble with much longing, sad and sere,  
Dreams once again of gardens white with flow-  
ers;  
And as she turns to brood upon the past,  
Weary, autumnal now, and old at last,  
Upon her face there shines the golden glow  
Of June, lost long ago.

## *AND OTHER POEMS*

### AT NIGHTFALL

I NEED so much the quiet of your love,  
After the day's loud strife;  
I need your calm all other things above,  
After the stress of life.

I crave the haven that in your dear heart lies,  
After all toil is done;  
I need the starshine of your heavenly eyes,  
After the day's great sun!



## QUATRAINS



### PREPARATION

**H**OW long the violets 'neath the snow  
Toiled ere they breathed the Spring!  
How long the poet dreamed his song  
Before his heart could sing!

## *THE QUIET SINGER*

### **CERTAINTY**

**S**HE knew that Love was dying—not so much  
When Love's dear eyes were closed and  
blind to her,  
As when, with patient word and tender touch,  
Love, day by day, alas! grew kind to her!

*AND OTHER POEMS*

THE FRIENDS

SHARE not thy joy with me, O friend the best,  
Thou may'st forget me then—I shall not  
care;

But shut me from thy grief the bitterest,  
And mine own grief would be too great to bear.

## *THE QUIET SINGER*

### A WINTER DREAM

THE host of flakes that float thro' leafless trees  
When pale December reigns in Autumn's  
stead,  
Are but the pallid ghosts of myriad bees,  
Come back to woo the roses that are dead.

*AND OTHER POEMS.*

SEPTEMBER

NOW at the grave of Summer stands  
A priest, in purple vestments stoled,  
And through the hills, his lifted hands,  
There runs a rosary of gold.

## *THE QUIET SINGER*

### THE GOOD QUEEN

**P**ALE ruler of the heavens, with lavish hand,  
The spendthrift Moon arose,  
And spilt her silver out across the land,  
Alike on friends and foes.

*AND OTHER POEMS*

UNHAPPINESS

**H**IGH on the hills the miser, Autumn, sits,  
Hoarding his wondrous wealth of treas-  
ured gold;  
Yet in the night I hear his grieving voice  
In every wind that sweeps across the wold.

## *THE QUIET SINGER*

### CARE

**S**HE leaves upon our brows her written sign,  
Where all may read, inscribed with perfect  
art;  
But O those marks the world may not divine—  
Her hidden tracings on the human heart!

## SONNETS

[85]



## THE PROMISE

SHE said to him, "Unless, when I am dead,  
From out the green sod of my lowly grave  
A crimson rose should rise and softly wave,  
Whispering words like those my poor heart said;  
Unless this token of a passion fled  
Should come to tell you all that you may crave,  
Then you shall know I loved you not! Be  
brave!  
That rose shall bloom, and you be comforted."

But when she died, not only in the Spring,  
When violets wake, and in the deeps of June,  
Her lover saw a red rose lightly blow;  
Not only did the golden Summer bring  
Gifts for his heart, but 'neath the Winter moon  
A passion-flower trembled thro' the snow!

## THE QUIET SINGER

### CITY CHILDREN

PALE flowers are you, that scarce have known  
the sun!

Your little faces like sad blossoms seem,  
Shut in some room, there helplessly to dream  
Of distant glens wherethrough glad rivers run  
And winds at evening whisper. Daylight done,  
You miss the tranquil moon's unfettered beam,  
The wide, unsheltered earth, the starlight  
gleam,  
All the old beauty meant for every one.

The clamor of the city streets you hear,  
Not the rich silence of the April glade;  
The sun-swept spaces which the good God  
made  
You do not know; white mornings keen and clear  
Are not your portion through the golden year,  
O little flowers that blossom but to fade!

*AND OTHER POEMS*

AFTER READING KEATS

DOWN his great corridors of sumptuous  
sound

To-day I wandered once again. Each word  
Seemed like the lyric rapture of a bird  
Singing in Spring above the burgeoning ground.  
O once again that old delight I found,  
Once more the marvel of his voice I heard,  
Until my spirit with new joy was stirred,  
Hearing such music through his halls resound.

How beautiful thy palace, Poet blest!—  
That room wherein is set thy Grecian Urn,  
Thy Nightingale that sings at set of sun  
Out in thy garden where my tired feet turn;  
And in one chamber, back from his long quest,  
That passionate lover, young Endymion!

## THE QUIET SINGER

### HOW BRAVELY NOW I FACE THE MARCHING DAYS

**H**OW bravely now I face the marching days,  
With Youth's strong armor to defy the  
years!

Nought now I know of the sharp sting of tears,  
Nor of the bleak and solitary ways  
Where Sorrow calls her children. Nought dis-  
mays

My April spirit; and the night appears  
Like some far-distant prospect without fears.  
Youth, youth is mine, and youth's strong, fear-  
less gaze.

But when the twilight shall at length abide,  
And I have neared the shadowy bourne and  
vast,

How will it be? . . . Shall the night overcast  
My soul, and shall my sword have softly sighed  
Back to its scabbard? . . . Nay, when Youth has  
died,  
Old Age shall take me tenderly at last.

## AND OTHER POEMS

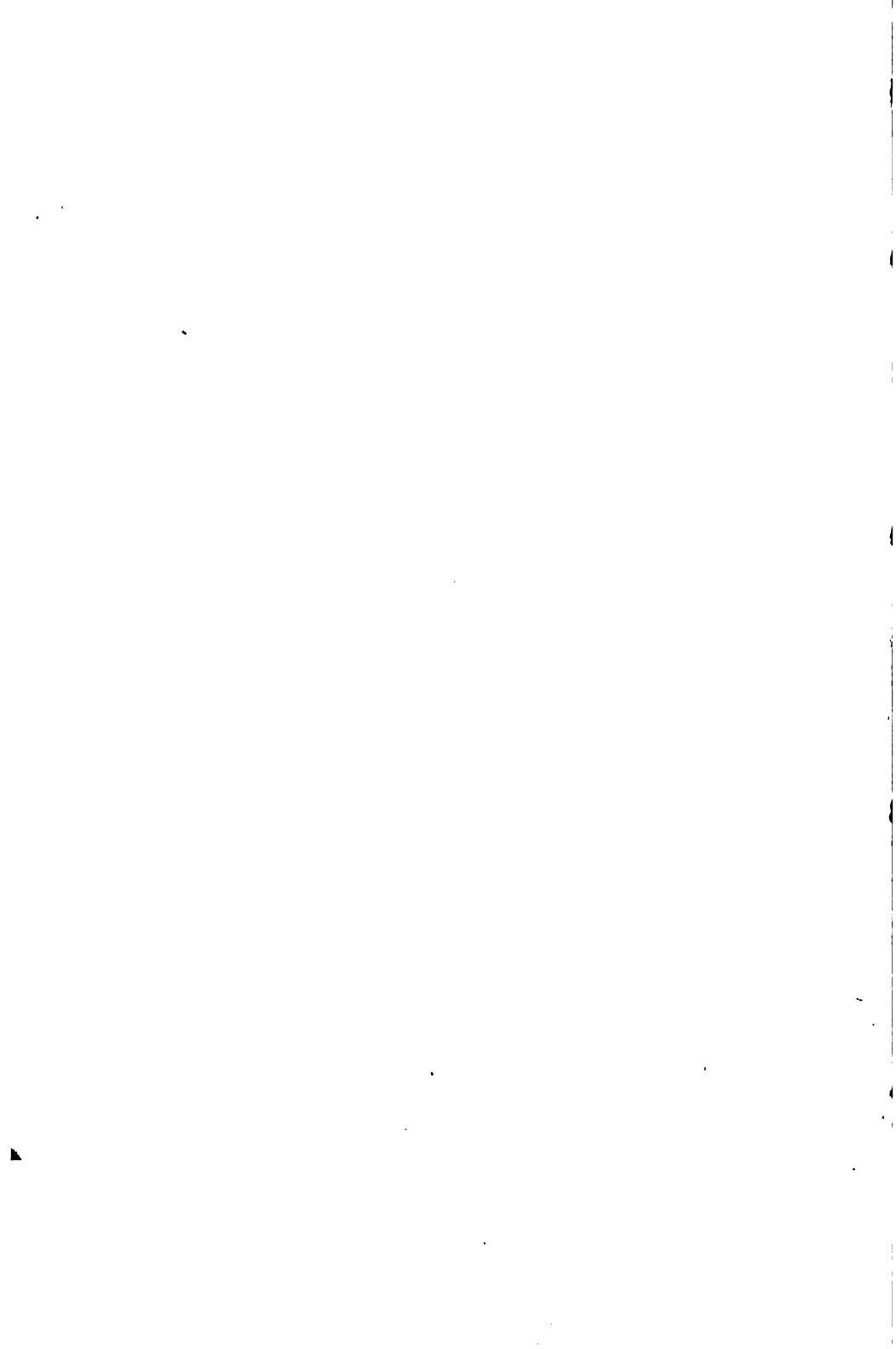
### A BROKEN FRIENDSHIP

**I**F this be friendship—that one broken hour  
    (O fragile link in all the loving years!)  
    Can cast our hearts asunder, Time appears  
Frightful indeed, since all our vaunted power,  
Wherewith we built high hope, like some strong  
    tower,  
    Crumbles to dust, where earthly passion leers.  
    What of our laughter? Aye, what of our tears  
That should have only watered Friendship's  
    flower?

If this be friendship, I can never know  
    Again the magic faith I boasted of;  
    One deed of mine has crushed the house of  
    love,  
And every stone to its old place must go.  
    Shame be to our endurance if we killed  
    The sinews that can help us to rebuild!



SONGS OF NEW YORK



## FIFTH AVENUE AT NIGHT

L IKE moonstones drooping from a fair queen's  
ears  
The pale lights seem—  
White gems that shimmer when the dark appears  
And the old dream—

The ancient dream that comes with every night  
Through the long street—  
The quiet and the shadows, and the light  
Tread of far feet.

## *THE QUIET SINGER*

### BROADWAY

**H**ERE surge the ceaseless caravans,  
Here throbs the city's heart,  
And down the street each takes his way  
To play his little part.

The tides of life flow on, flow on,  
And Laughter meets Despair;  
A heart might break along Broadway. . . .  
I wonder who would care?

*AND OTHER POEMS*

DOWNTOWN

THE sun has gone, and from the ferryboat  
That like a golden worm crawls through the  
night,

I watch the myriad stars that round me float,  
And, cityward, the honeycombs of light.

Tier after tier, they blossom in the dark,  
Miraculously radiant, while I  
Think of the toilers bent beneath each spark,  
And breathe a little prayer for them, and sigh.

## *THE QUIET SINGER*

### NEW BUILDINGS

**T**HE turrets leap higher and higher,  
And the little old homes go down;  
The workmen pound on the iron and steel—  
The woodpeckers of the town.

*AND OTHER POEMS*

THE LIGHTS

TEN thousand jewels flash out  
When the darkness of night appears;  
But O I sometimes think these pearls  
Are ten thousand people's tears—

Ten thousand tears that are shed  
Through the terrible strife of the day,  
And doomed to shine through the city's night  
Till the stars have faded away.

## THE QUIET SINGER

### TO A HURDY-GURDY

*(Playing on Sixth Avenue)*

**H**ERE'S to you, brave Hurdy-gurdy,  
Grinding out your happy tune  
While the traffic round you rumbles,  
In the city's Summer noon.

No one hears you! Yet the rapture  
That you feel, despite our faults,  
As you gaily give the measure  
Of the latest merry waltz!

Trams are rolling all about you—  
How the Elevated roars!  
And above their noise and tumult  
Your thin twanging vainly soars.

Good for you, poor Hurdy-gurdy!  
Play, unheard, your little part;  
Would that I could sing as you do,  
With but half as brave a heart!

*AND OTHER POEMS*

TRAFFIC

**H**OOF-BEATS thundering on the paves,  
Wagons crashing by.  
(But O I dream of distant waves,  
God's tent of open sky!)

Bells that clamor all day long,  
Rush and roar of steam.  
(But I have heard a robin's song,  
If only in my dream!)

## THE QUIET SINGER

### THE VOICES

I HEARD the voice of the city,  
    Calling again and again,  
And into her arms there hastened  
    Millions and millions of men.

And I heard the voice of old gardens,  
    Of quiet woodland ways;  
But few there were who would heed them  
    In the rush of the busy days.

The cities grow old and vanish,  
    And their people faint and die;  
But the gardens are green forever,  
    Forever blue is the sky!

*AND OTHER POEMS*

NEXT DOOR

**W**E saw the tapers burn  
In the home so close to ours;  
But however our hearts might yearn,  
We dared not send our flowers.  
"He will not understand," we said,  
"Our loving thought of his loved dead."

O City! thus you hide  
The pity in every heart!  
Those who are at our side  
You sunder a world apart.  
A little barrier built of stone—  
And my neighbor grieves—alone, alone!

## THE QUIET SINGER

### THE PARKS

THERE are green islands in the city sea,  
Where all day long, the endless, passionate  
waves

Beat, yet destroy not; and their quiet saves  
How many a heart grown sick with memory!

Not derelicts alone are foundered there,  
But children with the laughter of the May—  
Bright, living flowers—in these glad gardens  
play,  
Knowing, yet knowing not, the town's despair!

God made the ocean, where tumultuously  
The loud storms burst; and Babylon He made;  
Yet all the hills are His, dim valley and glade—  
There are green islands in the city sea.

*AND OTHER POEMS*

A CITY SUNSET

**A** CROSS the roof-tops of the town  
I saw the flaming sun go down;  
For some, another day of tears  
Lay buried in the hurrying years.

The shadows folded ; here and there  
A yellow light began to flare.  
For some, another golden day  
Of gladness sped upon its way.



**SONGS OUT OF THE ORIENT**

**[ 107 ]**



## A BAGHDAD LOVER

*(Being Certain Fragments from Scheherazade's  
Songs in "The Thousand and One Nights")*

(TO GEORGE H. CASAMAJOR)

### I

O QUEEN of Beauty, who hast conquered  
kings,

O woman wonderful, in pity be  
Most merciful to one who softly sings  
Thy matchless glory; yea, to one who brings  
His broken songs, sung but in praise of thee.

I am the prisoner of thy two eyes!

Roses nor lilies breathe a sweeter breath  
Than thou, when Dawn's great minarets arise.  
Thy breath is like a breeze from Paradise,  
Yet languorous with the mystery of Death!

The Pleiades, which thro' the darkness blaze,  
From thy great orbs have filched their won-  
drous light.

Only the stars, with their undying rays,  
Shall make a necklace like a golden haze  
To hang about thy throat, O woman white!

## THE QUIET SINGER

### II

To kiss her! 'Tis with musk-perfume to grow  
Drunken with joy—delirium to know!  
To feel her body bend 'neath my embrace,  
See the carved marble of her lily face!  
To kiss her! I am drunk who have no wine—  
Wild ecstasy, wild ecstasy divine!  
Dizzy at eve, at sundown my heart sips  
The perfumed nectar of her lips, her lips!

## *AND OTHER POEMS*

### III

The praises of her beauty I shall sing,  
Yea, though her beauty be my suffering!

Lo! one to me hath come and softly said,  
"O thou who with Love's sorrowing hast bled,

"Rise! Here is Life's great music, Life's guitar,  
Luring thy soul to some exquisite star!"

And I have said, "How can my poor heart sing,  
Since I have felt Love's sharp and ceaseless  
sting?"

## THE QUIET SINGER

### IV

If one should ask of me, when all afire  
My ravished heart might be,  
“What is thy wish, thine utmost dear desire—  
One draught from some cool spring to drain,  
or her white face to see?”—  
I should make answer, tho’ I fainted sore,  
Tho’ my pale lips were dry,  
“Let me behold her, ere I pass the Door;  
Let me drink of her pool-deep eyes—drink love,  
drink love—and die!”

*AND OTHER POEMS*

**V**

So much I love, that I  
Faint with the joy I know;  
Yea, for that joy is pierced  
With the great thorn of woe!

So much I love, that I  
Envy the cup she sips,  
When over-long it rests  
On her soft, crimson lips!

## THE QUIET SINGER

### VI

What morn shall find thee, O departed one,  
Under the fragrant dew?  
Thou hast appeared, O gentle-hearted one,  
Back to my famished view.  
Clad in white vestments, thou who hast been ban-  
ished  
Out of this lonely place,  
I saw thee once at dusk. . . . Now thou hast  
vanished,  
And left, alas! no trace!

*AND OTHER POEMS*

VII

The myrtles of Damascus, when they smile,  
Exalt my soul to some remote, high place—  
But O thy face!

Roses of Baghdad, bathed in moonlight dew,  
Make my heart drunk when all their joy it  
sips—  
But O thy lips!

## *THE QUIET SINGER*

### VIII

O form to which the palms have lent their grace,  
And all the jasmines given their perfume,  
What lovelier form goes wandering thro'  
earth's room?

O eyes to which the diamond lends its light,  
And night its radiant stars,  
What woman's eyes give forth a fire more bright?

O kiss more sweet than honey from her mouth,  
What woman's kiss is fresher from the South?

O to caress thy hair! to feel my heart  
Thrill against thine! . . . Then to gaze in thine  
eyes,  
And see the stars arise!

*AND OTHER POEMS*

IX

O tomb! within thy shadows can it be  
My dear belovèd hides away from me?

O tomb, by Allah, tell me, lest I die,  
Is all her beauty vanished utterly?

Have her vast charms been blotted out?—her  
white  
And pallid brow been lost in thy deep night?

Surely, O tomb! no bit of heaven is thine,  
Who foldest close that wondrous love of mine.

Yet in thy depths, thy darkened depths, O tomb,  
I see the stars shine and white lilies bloom!

## *THE QUIET SINGER*

### FROM A BAGHDAD WINDOW

(TO RICHARD DUFFY)

#### I

**L**ISTEN, O Love, to that far-distant strain,  
The bulbul sings outside the city gate.  
This is the twilight hour, all consecrate,  
When his poor heart with love is full, or  
strangely desolate!

Harken, O Love! Is it a note of pain  
That passes down toward sunset's golden bars?  
Lean close, lean close! Let us forget life's  
scars,  
And watch for night's transcendent train of  
peace-bestowing stars!

## *AND OTHER POEMS*

### II

I shall forget the day's great heat  
When in the night your heart shall beat,  
In rhythmic measure, close to mine,  
And thro' the dark your dear eyes shine!

I shall forget the torrid breeze  
That swept all day the tall palm-trees,  
When in the night, the quiet night,  
Your lips meet mine for Love's delight!

## *THE QUIET SINGER*

### III

This is mine hour of jubilation—this,  
When my hot brow grows cool beneath thy kiss!

I am the weary desert, thou the dusk,  
Bringing thy peace and soothing scent of musk.

I am that weary waste which all day long  
Dreamed of thy starshine and thine evensong!

*AND OTHER POEMS*

IV

Belovèd, see, how on yon minarets  
The sun's flames leap and shine;  
And see, how on yon towering parapets  
They glow like crimson wine!

O let me be as constant unto thee,  
As steadfast as the sun,  
Dawn after dawn to rise from dreams and be  
Glad that the dark is done!

## *THE QUIET SINGER*

### V

What night with all its pageantry,  
Its web of golden dream,  
Has made the heavens appear to me  
Fairer than your eyes seem?

What silver of the early dawn  
Has made your throat less white?  
Give me your face to look upon,  
And what of dawn, or night?

*AND OTHER POEMS*

VI

O dome and spire, and mosque and shrine,  
And temples built of gold  
May lift their glory, glint, and shine,  
Till all the years have rolled  
In chaos to that brink of night  
When Allah says the world shall lose its wonder  
and its light.

But hush! O my beloved one!  
For our great love shall last  
Through darkness and the shadowed sun,  
Till Death itself has passed.  
O we shall love, be unafraid,  
When this pale city that we see in paler dust is  
laid!

*THE QUIET SINGER*

A LOVER IN DAMASCUS

(To AMY WOODFORDE-FINDEN)

I

FAR, far across the desert sands,  
I hear the camel-bells;  
Merchants have come from alien lands,  
With stuffs, and gems, and silken bands,  
Back where their old love dwells.

O my beloved, far away  
Are cities by the sea;  
Yet should I go to far Cathay  
For many a weary night and day,  
My dreams were still of thee.

## AND OTHER POEMS

### II

Through the old city's silence,  
Where the Abana flows,  
O harken to the nightingale  
Sing lyrics to the rose!

But through the dusk no answer  
Is ever breathed or sung,  
Tho' the bird's heart with pleading  
The whole long night is wrung.

Yet well the lonely songster  
Knows that the red rose hears.  
. . . Ah, Love, I need no answer,  
But let me see your tears!

## THE QUIET SINGER

### III

Belovèd, in your absence I have told  
My love for you to every little flower—  
Vermilion, pink and purple, red and gold—  
That blossoms in our fragrant-hearted bower.

And should I die ere you come back again,  
Would not the rose my golden vows repeat?  
Yes, every bloom would whisper through the rain,  
And fling its perfumed message at your feet!

## AND OTHER POEMS

### IV

How many a lonely caravan sets out  
On its long journey o'er the desert, Doubt,  
Yet comes back home laden with ivory,  
With gold, and gums, and scarfs from oversea.

So went my lonely heart forth on its quest;  
Through torrid wastes and parchèd ways it  
    pressed.  
Empty and sad it left the city gate,  
But came back with your precious love for  
    freight!

## THE QUIET SINGER

### V

If in the great bazaars  
They sold the golden stars,  
Belovèd, there should be  
A necklace strung for thee,  
More wonderful than any known or dreamed of,  
Love, by me.

If wealth could buy the mist  
By Dawn's pale, pearl lips kissed,  
Belovèd, there should be  
A white veil wrought for thee,  
More marvellous than that faint film which hangs  
above the sea.

*AND OTHER POEMS*

VI

Ah! when the dark on many a heart descends,  
Our joy more swiftly runs;  
Heart of my heart, our great love never ends,  
Though set ten thousand suns!

Allah be with us when that last deep night  
Shall wrap us round about;  
And Love be with us, with her steadfast light,  
When Death our spark blows out!

## THE QUIET SINGER

### CERTAIN FRAGMENTS FROM THE ARABIC

#### I

**Y**OU who are wise to-day,  
What of your knowledge when Life's little  
play  
Is ended, and the curtain rustles down—  
What of your wisdom then, your great renown?

Make me not wise, like you ;  
I envy neither sage nor prophet Jew.  
Beggared, each journeyed here, and sought for  
fame,  
And lo ! went forth as poor as when he came !

*AND OTHER POEMS*

II

I did not know the nightingale could fling  
Into one song the whole wild soul of Spring;  
I did not know—until I heard him sing.

I did not know that Love held all of bliss—  
Yea, all that ever was, and all that is;  
I did not know—until I felt your kiss!

## *THE QUIET SINGER*

### III

O in that hour when both of us are dead,  
When all of Life and Love at last is said,  
Will some red rose bloom o'er our graves to tell  
how our hearts bled?

Or will a lily, in the starlit night,  
Lift its pale wonder and its waxen light,  
To tell the world how our poor hearts loved with  
a love most white?





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